

Mr. Vincent P. De Santis
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1/14/88

Dear Mr. De Santis,

That the ignorance, prejudice and arrogance of your article in Notre Dame Magazine are not exceptional is made clear by your letter of the ninth to me. (On a Notre Dame letterhead in a University of Victoria envelope.)

I say that the first of my seven books was published in 1965 and you know better. You insist it was not published until 1966. I enclose a xerox of the copyright page. It will make no difference to you because you know you know better but at least Mr. Collins will be able to decide for himself which of us is accurate in what we say.

You use words used by Michael Kurtz only and they are not his words - they are your own. This is the same Michael Kurtz whose book using them you praise and quote. Naturally you did not get them from that book.

Some scholarship for a professor of history who limits his knowledge to "the latter part of the 1960's (sic, repeated twice)" in commenting on a field in which there has been so much published since then. Yet on the basis of your ignorance you did write the article on the assassination of our only Catholic President for our pre-eminent Catholic university.

My concern is not really with what you said about me. It is that based on nothing but ignorance, prejudice and arrogance you traded on your reputation to mislead Notre Dame's alumni and students and those unfortunate enough to see your disgraceful piece in the future. If you got paid for it and have any self-respect you'll return what you were paid because you defrauded the editor who trusted you and led him to mislead his readers.

* Perhaps in your concept of scholarship it is appropriate to depend on recollection two decades after reading a book. There was a time when I expected better of professional historians. If this is your standard, you are welcome to it. It is not mine.

You refer to one book. There were seven. Real scholarship.

I did what professional historians like you did not have the balls to do - I sued the FBI, CIA and others for historically-significant records and got about a third of a million pages of them, all to be a permanent public archive. Indeed, the Congress ^{Freedom of Information} amended the act over one of my FOIA suits. This led to the disclosures of so much official wrongdoing for you professional historians, like Kurtz, to get with no effort. Unlike you what I wrote had to stack up in court or I'd be prosecuted. Not scholarship and not worthy of mention, worthy of only your cheap slurs because none of you college-educated ignoramuses did it.

From the first my work has been a rather large study of how the basic institutions of our society worked in that time of great stress and since then. All our basic institutions. You are part of one. All failed.

You were consistent. You wrote a truly disgraceful essay for Notre Dame Magazine, contributed to the disinformation and misinformation, and for this further demonstration of the persisting failures of our institutions I do thank you.

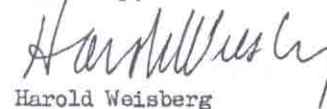
Not all professors are like you, however. A number of institutions now offer courses dealing with the assassinations in various ways. Those of which I have personal knowledge are responsible and do not teach idle conspiracy theories. My books are still used in them. The book ~~from~~ about which you cribbed Kurtz' cheap shot (what else was he to do when he cribbed so much from it and my other books?) is even a criminalistics text.

Well, professor, you are now in a fine position to evaluate the work of a student whose essay flaunts the ignorance of a subject as you did in that essay.

Past 75 and in impaired health I really do not care personally about what you and others like you think or say about me. But I do care about students and others being misled and misinformed. So, I am asking Mr. Collins by the copy I send him to please annotate his file copy of that issue to the Guth and Wrong bibliography on the subject and to ask Notre Dame's library to do this with ^{its} that file copy so that those who do care about how our institutions worked then and since, those who do care about fact about the assassination of the President, can, if they so desire, learn something about what was available as of the time of publication of that bibliography.

I am sorry for you, that you could bring yourself to depart from the standards of your profession after a lifetime devoted to it, particularly on this subject, which gets to the integrity of our society.

Sincerely,


Harold Weisberg

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All rights reserved, including the right to
reproduce this book or portions thereof in
any form.

To my wife, whose ancestors dreamed of man's
freedom, fought the Revolution to establish it, and
preserved it by fighting both for and against the
Union; who is the living embodiment of their spirit
and deep beliefs; and whose Great Labor made this
book possible. With the full appreciation of the
value of this inheritance that became mine when my
parents emigrated to a land in which their son would
be born free, this book is lovingly dedicated.